872 to go home because Grandmother would have sent him back for a double
792 beating, so he hitched up his longyi, tied his shirt round his head and
861 swam across the stream. One of the huts on the other bank belonged to a woman who had always been very fond of him because she believed
[775] him to be a reincarnation of her brother who had died in childhood; Burmese Buddhists believe that one goes through many existences on this earth, and sometimes children are born who have not yet forgotten their previous existence by the time they can talk; they adopt habits uncannily like those of the departed member who, the fond and grieving relatives hope, has returned to them in the guise of this new child; they say "My bed", "My clothes" to the possessions of the dead person, especially if eggs are not included in their diet, the belief being that eggs cause them to forget. When we were very young, the fame of a wonder child, who could recite the most learned religious passages untaught, spread throughout Burma, and my parents travelled to hear him; he had been a monk in his past existence and could remember.

792 My father's case was no outstanding one like this; he had just re-
561 sembled the lady's brother in looks and gesture, and a few childish utterances helped out by her belief had endeared my father to her as having been *winsa* (come in and inhabited) by her brother. The good and fond lady received the boy with open arms, agreed that he was getting too old for the monastery, and promised to go over and plead with my grandmother to take him out now and hasten his initiation ceremony into the priesthood. This was achieved and my father went back to his mother's house and prepared for the *shinbyu* as the ceremony was called.

● 484 The manner of his exit from the monastery, however, had made
177 him restless. During the short period he was free, he could go where
874 he willed, and in this way he often met traders who came and went between Ye and Tavoy, a seaport town about 100 miles away, to which passenger and cargo ships from Moulmein made regular trips. One day he was at the house on the opposite bank when a boy he used to know as a toddler returned from Tavoy after a trip to Moulmein. This boy could speak a few words of English. Moreover, he wore his hair in a *boha-dauk* (a Westerner's crop) and seemed to think my father a jungle boy. All the restlessness in my father flowed over then, because up to now he had always felt himself clever and ahead of other boys. He worried Grandmother to let him go to Moulmein and learn English, and and get a job with the government which would bring them hundreds of rupees each month. Other families who considered that Grandmother had clever sons agreed that this would be a good idea; though none of them had been to Moulmein and my father was still a boy, it would not be so daring an adventure as it sounded, because there was some one

among our relations in the village who had Anglo-Burman connections in Moulmein. These would put my father in school and look after him.

So after his shinbyu and his spell in the monastery, my father set off down the ye creek to catch a sailing boat of trader friends who, in their sailing ships called *kattu*, ventured as far as the Nicobar Islands and could sail to Moulmein in about seven days. His head was now cropped, and my grandmother had put a ruby ring on his finger; he was 16 years old, which was a very late age to start English schooling and pass it in time to get a good civil service job, but everyone at home thought he would do it easily for he had been the brightest boy in the monastery school.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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animals generally when a journey is being made for any distance. At night the carts are arranged in a laager with the high backs outwards, and all inside, including even the pariah dogs, are safe from wild animals. The waggoners used to glory in the strident sound of their wheels, which often can be heard miles off in the forest. A wheel with a creak of particular volume and power of penetration is highly prized, and an experienced driver can tell whom he is going to meet or overtake by the groanings of the axles and the key in which they are pitched. Every bullock in addition carries a square metal bell tied under his throat.

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In the yard round about the house there is very often a little garden fenced off in a rough kind of way, but no particular care is taken to keep it neat and free from weeds—no easy matter even for an active gardener in Burma. The favourite plant is always the Bôddha Tharanat (*Canna Indica*, or Indian shot), so named from its seeds, which are used for the beads of the rosary. The flowers are red, or sometimes white. The fable relates that it sprang from the Buddha's blood. His impious and evil-minded brother-in-law and cousin Dewádat, enraged that he was not allowed to have a separate assembly of his own, went to the top of a hill and rolled down a huge stone, intending to destroy the most excellent payā. But the boulder burst into a thousand pieces, and only one little bit bruised Shin Gautama's toe, and drew a few drops of blood, whence sprang the sacred flower. The renowned physician Zewaka healed the great teacher's wound in a single day, and almost immediately afterwards the earth opened and swallowed up the sacrilegious Dewadat. The plants and flowers usually stand demurely in a single row, or perhaps in three or four, like a patch of peas. The *Datura tatula* is almost always found, and among the other mingled vegetables and medicinal plants the *Celosia cristata*, in both its yellow and purple varieties, is a special favourite. But the Burman can scarcely vaunt his success as a flower gardener.

There are always a few domestic animals and pets about the premises. Every family has its dog, which trots about the establishment and makes a terrible to-do whenever a white man appears. The pariahs are magnificent watch-

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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women are found to make the ascent, especially at the Zwè-kabin, the precipitous "Duke of York's nose," some forty miles up the Sittang river from Maulmein, where the Englishman is lost in amazement as to how they ever got the bricks and ironwork up the rocks to construct the pagoda and the hti. Yet thousands of people scramble up at the time of the annual feast, and the pagoda is as well adorned with offerings as any in the flat lands down by the sea, where a rise of a few feet in the ocean would put hundreds of square miles under water.

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Every district pagoda has its special feast and all are well attended, for even though the locality may be thinly populated there are always to be found visitors from other places round about; partly as a kind of neighbourly courtesy, partly because there is always some fun in the shape of a travelling troupe, or a marionette play, at a pagoda feast, and chiefly, there can be no denying, from a feeling of genuine piety and a real desire to acquire merit. Pagoda feasts enable a Burman to see the world, as far as it can be seen in his native land. Without the periodical festivals he would only stop chewing betel in the wattled bothy where he was born to go out and smoke a cheroot round his patch of paddy land, and speculate on the time when the Rangoon or Bassein broker would come up to buy his crop from him. Most of the district Burmans would never see the Englishman and his doings were it not for the annual pilgrimage to Rangoon to worship at the Shwe Dagôn. During the rest of the year, unless he lives in the headquarters of an assistant commissionership, all he sees of the British occupation is a stray visit from a young official out shooting, or the chance appearance of an inspector of police in search of a criminal.

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Similarly very few Burmans, except those attracted by business to the capital, would ever visit Mandalay were it not for the great "Arakan pagoda." The Mahā Myat Muni Payā is rendered especially sacred by the sitting image of Shin Gautama there preserved, and is on this account regarded by Upper Burmans as not inferior in sanctity to the Shwe Dagôn itself. The huge brass image, twelve feet in height, was brought over the hills from Akyab in the year

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XIII

FESTIVALS

'The law is sweet, filling the soul with joy.'
Saying of the Buddha.

THE three months of the rains, from the full moon of July to the full moon of October, is the Buddhist Lent. It was during these months that the Buddha would retire to some monastery and cease from travelling and teaching for a time. The custom was far older even than that—so old that we do not know how it arose. Its origin is lost in the mists of far-away time. But whatever the beginning may have been, it fits in very well with the habits of the people; for in the rains travelling is not easy. The roads are very bad, covered even with water, often deep in mud; and the rest-houses, with open sides, are not very comfortable with the rain drifting in. Even if there were no custom of Lent, there would be but little travelling then. People would stay at home, both because of the discomfort of moving, and because there is much work then at the village. For this is the time to plough, this is the time to sow; on the villagers' exertions in these

cloth, small enough to keep mosquitos out. The other kind was made of plain cloth to keep out the smallest insects. The nets are rectangular for a single bed, square for a double. They are suspended over the bed on a wooden framework and tucked under the mattress. Pathee: three were used by the family and two kept in reserve. Each lasted 4 or 5 years. The reserve nets cost Rs. 60/- each, the others Rs. 40/- or 45/- each. Camp: one old one was brought from Pathee, this is used by U Myaing and his wife. The rest of the family have none. Two are desired.

TA-HKWET-SHE, broom: The hand broom is used to brush out dust and dirt from the floor of the house. It is about 2 feet long, 2 inches in diameter and consists of bent over bunches of stiff reeds bound at the top by a more flexible reed strip. The one used in camp cost 12 annas in Rangoon.

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Burmese Concepts about the Home.

The following Burmese ideas about the home were secured mainly from Ko Maung Than, my research assistant.

The Burmese regard the KIN-YAR (home place) with great love, and as the most essential feature of life. The head of a family will frequently admonish: "My young ones let us remain with our nest intact and our eggs uncracked", this is also a common prayer. The ideal is to preserve the family home with necessary repairs in its original form. Wooden (teak) houses are preferred to bamboo. The husband and wife are partners in the ownership of the home which they start at marriage. Indeed, the word for "marriage" KIN-DAUNG-PIU (Home-separately-build) emphasizes the importance of building a home upon starting a family. In villages the mother and children spend almost all of their time in and around the home. Since the Burmese are especially sedentary, short journeys being unusual and infrequent events, the house is the spot where he lives and dies. It is furthermore his "castle" and place of security within which he is "ruler".

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Each house is under the direct protection of MIN MAHA-GIRI one of the 37 major nats of Burma. He controls the fortunes of the family and in return is revered. A coconut, the symbol of MIN-

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also used to do this. Sometimes they are able to extract about 5 viss of oil each in one day. 226 463 621

"There are also cultivators in the village. Some of those who work INS also own fields. They rent out the land to tenants. There are altogether 12 people in our village who own cultivation fields. But the biggest landowner does not own lands more extensive than three hundred acres. Some own 40 or 50 acres. Some engage cultivators and work their fields themselves, while others rent out the fields for a certain percentage of the produce. 421 463 621 427

"There were paid workers in the IN. They were paid, not a daily wage, but a monthly salary of Rs. 30/- without food. About 50 of the 80 workers were paid workers, though some of them owned shares as well. In addition to their pay, these paid workers received quite a lot of fish which their families went around selling. They get one or two basket-loads of fish to sell, and in this way make quite a lot of money. 226 463 465

"Fish is not distributed in this manner every day - only when the fish start coming down in great numbers. On these occasions however the workers get about 25 to 30 viss each - that is, by the boatload. Ordinarily they are given just enough for one meal.

"I also own eleven cows; eight for loaning out to cultivators and three for breeding purposes. No milk is drawn for human consumption because that is not the custom in our native place." 231 [272]

One yoke of oxen hired out brought U Myaing 50 baskets of paddy a year. He had 4 yokes. They kept by 100 baskets for home consumption and sold the rest at a rate fluctuating between Rs. 100/- and Rs. 175/- per hundred baskets.

In those years when U Myaing works at INS, he has to confine himself to such work only. During those years when he does not work at INS, he buys the fish from IN workers and process them for sale as NGAGYI, NGA-CHAUK, etc. Each year he uses between four to five thousand fish. When U Myaing his co-workers could not get an IN, he had to buy fish and make NGA-CHAUK, (dried fish), NGAPI and NGAMYAW-YE. 226 463 433

On his former visits to Rangoon U Myaing came in a boat loaded with NGAGYI CHAUK (dried NGA GYI) and transferred it to the care of a broker in Rangoon. He then ascended the Shwe Dagon pagoda platform, donated money and water, returned to the broker, and went around the town to places like Mogul Street (the Indian quarter) for meats and ate pillau-rice etc. It took three or four days, and sometimes about ten days for the broker to dispose of his goods and in this time he would go round all the pagodas in Rangoon like the Botataung, Sule, Mya-ktut-gyi etc. Once he went to a Chinese hotel known as the HAN-HIN hotel together with some traders from DABEYIN. They pooled the expenses. The journey home took a day and a night. He took back with him clothes, longyis, KINNYIS, durian fruit, 226 438 484 [778]

226 438 •484 [431] oranges, guava fruit, mangosteen fruit - together worth about forty or fifty rupees. When he arrived at Pathwe this was distributed among the members of his family, and also some relatives and the phongyis. On one such trip he made Rs. 2700/- which he carried back hidden away in a jar of salt.

494 465 U Myaing never came in to Rangoon purely for a visit. Besides bringing down fish, U Myaing also came to Rangoon before the war to buy some motor parts and accessories such as tyres, tubes, etc. which they could not obtain in Pathwe village or in Pantanaw town. At that period in his life U Myaing used to drive a bus between Pathwe and the village on the bank of the river across from Pathwe. There was a cart track for a road, and they used to carry passengers at a rupee per head. In the rains this cart track became impossible and so they traversed this route only from TA-ZAUNG-MON to KASON months. U Myaing worked on this route for three summers. In the rains they shifted operations to the Maubin Ye Le route, which was a 10 mile journey, and occasionally the 10 mile route from Ye Le to HSE-DEING-

[491] MAW. He worked at these places for two rainy seasons, from WASO right up till the month of TA-ZAUNG-MON. The bus was owned by his cousin who collected all the earnings for each day. At that time bus drivers were hired at Rs. 45/- a month, plus sweet tea, food, shelter and one packet of cigarettes a day. "In Pathwe all the houses were too large and could accomodate a great many more people than they actually did. This was because each one erected his own building after the example of the other houses in the village. The person who hired the bus driver merely installed him in his home".

[589] This was when U Myaing was 17 or 18 years old. He was not paid anything, but the family was provided with everything they needed - food, clothes, etc. (U Myaing was still unmarried and the family

[582] consisted of two sisters, his mother and himself. (He did not marry

[431] till the age of thirty.) Both U Myaing and Daw Aw Zar estimated that the things they received from the bus owner would have amounted to much more than forty five rupees' worth.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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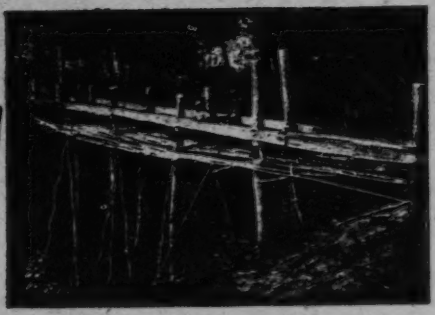

312. COUNTRY BRIDGE.

Shan hills, where alone breeding is a regular business. The Shan pony is stouter than the Burman, but not so hardy. The Burmans train their ponies to amble at a forced pace by sawing the bit as they urge them on; the ponies' mouths become hard in consequence. Ponies used to be worth twenty to fifty rupees, but now, many times more. Arab stud-horses have recently been introduced by the British Government. Ponies were used for riding only, doubtless owing to the want of roads and vehicles good enough for quick draught. There is little or no leather about the Burman saddle and accoutrements. The seat is a thick pad stuffed with cotton, with a hollow to leave the backbone free. The girth and stirrup holders are cotton web, the bridle and crupper are of thick cotton rope, plaited over with red cotton yarn; the stirrups are of brass, the plain bit is iron (No. 228). The Burmans hog their ponies' manes, but they admire a long natural tail. Very few animals are left entire.

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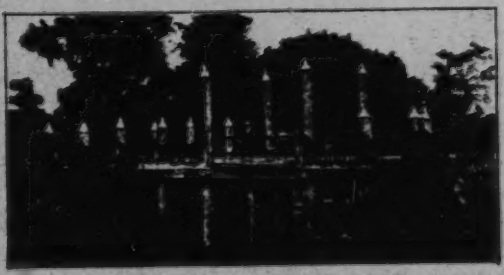
Travel is made easy in Burma. There are rest-houses (*zaydi*) for travellers at every town and village and at every stage on the road. Both these and the needful foot-bridges (*tadá*) are provided from religious motives. The foot-traveller will get a lift on his way by cart or boat, and will take an oar or a hand at a job in return; those who can afford it pay their way. The Burman is a poor linguist, and is wholly engrossed with the language and ways of his own people. The aliens on his soil and the neighbouring races meet the Burman half way, saving him the need of learning languages and adopting from him their notions of culture and fashion. Encountering, as he does, within the limits of his travels, a material welfare little



313. ROYAL BARGE.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

484 inferior to his own—not penetrating as far as China or India, where he might
485 witness the dire struggle for existence which has disciplined the races about to compete for his soil—the Burman fails to realise how enviable is the lot he

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315. TOWN ENVIRONS IN THE DRY ZONE.

318. CARVED FIGURE OF ANANDA (p. 35).

now enjoys and to recognise the nature of the influences which may effect the decline of his prosperity. Great as are the facilities for travel from the native point of view, to Europeans the discomfort of travel, once off the lines of rail and steamer, is so considerable that few who can avoid it visit the interior.

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317. FERRY STATION.